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My Dear Little Girl

and

Other Poems.

Edwin Styles Metcalf.

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"MY DEAR LITTLE GIRL"

and

OTHER POEMS.

By

EDWIN STYLES METCALF.

Author of
"A Treatise on Melody," "Olio of Isms and Ologies."
Etc.

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"MY DEAR LITTLE GIRL."

Have you seen my dear little girl,
Dear to me as the sea to the pearl,
With ways soft and dainty, eyes drooping
with love,
With movements and voice like a young
cooing dove?

Well, she's mine, that dear little girl,
Who makes pretty and modest the curl
With her shapely and dainty, artistic-like
fingers;
How dear is the time and the place where
she lingers!

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There are many quite like her, you say,
Who resemble her much in their way,
With her voice and its notes and her loving
caresses,
With her sweet, pretty ways, bright eyes
and fair tresses.

Oh, yes, but my thought runs this way,
To what lies far beneath the wild spray;
The pearl is not seen on the wave or the
crest;
The sea keeps its worth hid away in its
breast.

Thus it is with my dear little girl,
Whom I love as the sea loves the pearl;
Her ways that so charm are the wild spray
and crest,
But the pearl so admired you'll find deep
in her breast.

THE ANGELS KNOW.

The angels see—the angels know
Why mamma loves her baby so;
A sense so pure, so all divine,
One cannot reason—nor define.

Yet, mothers know 'tis not the same
That lovers feel when they it name;
A mother's love lies deep beneath
The love that weaves the bridal wreath.

The nightingale sings sweet her song,
As lovers stroll the woods along;
But morning stars and angels sing
When they pure natal bells hear ring.

O, baby mine!—treasure divine!
My heart is full—my life is thine;
May angels be thy guide and mine,
Let me the oak be—thou the vine.

THE SUPREME,

What is that mysterious something,
Universal in space and in time;
That formless—unseen—acting something,
That sages have sought to define;
That something, that permeates Nature
With life and design—never dies;
That something, that rules with such order,
That commands here and there in the skies.

That something, with power to give motion,
That something, with power to give Life;
That something, involving the notion
Of Death—as a solvent for strife;
That something, that's more than mere Nature,
That baffles proud Science—its creature,
That something, all mystery—fools dare to define,
That something essential—all soul—the Divine.

That power that gave form to Creation,
  Set the spheres in their orbits to rhyme,
That power that gave Earth vegetation,
  Ordered Light! and made Darkness sublime!
That something, to man so mysterious,
  Yet felt in his soul all the while;
That something he feels — when most serious—
  The Supreme!—that no power can defile.

THE FLOWERS STILL BLOOM.

The flowers still bloom as when we met,
Where silver brook runs laughing yet;
There still the soft, sweet zephyrs play,
And nightingale sings her sweet lay;
There stars yet shine bright o'er the way,
Where forth we strolled in twilight gray;
And echoes answering echoes tell
Words that our hearts remember well.

There, as the dew drops gently fell,
My proud heart dared its love to tell;
I loved thee then, I love thee now—
A love more pure ne'er heart did vow.
I still in dreams admiring trace
A Paradise in thy sweet face;
Thy tender voice and queenly grace,
Still haunts my soul, naught can efface.

Oh cruel Fate! that did us part!
That would invade and wreck my heart!
Yet deigned no recompense to give
Save only this: it bade me live
To sigh, and weep, and long, and grieve,
For what I lost, beyond retrieve!
Perhaps 'tis best—but angels know,
That thee I love as years ago.

HE—THE GOD—WITH NAME OF FATE.

I was dreaming, so I'm thinking, dreaming,
what I now relate,
And thus dreaming, wandering, peering—
t'was I met the god of Fate.
Well I knew him, when I saw him—by his
trappings and his gait,
Well I knew his name, his calling, sure I
was his name was Fate.

Oft I'd read of him in story, of his power
that mortals prate,
And I trembled thus to meet him at an hour
both dark and late,
On his trail from high Olympus, with a
grin becoming Fate;
He, so slouchy—sneaking—crouching—
thus he looked, I do relate,
He—the god—whose name is Fate.

Face to face we stood, he grinning, ghastly
shone the lamp he bore;
Howled the winds an insane howling, roared
in terror—roar on roar;
There I stood, my soul affrighted—help!—
no help could I implore.
Let the god himself relate it, mortal ne'er
met like before!

Soon the frowning god was speaking, while
his grin did not abate;
"You're the man, methinks, I'm seeking—
tho' the hour is dread and late,
Here's a note for you, I'm thinking," in
deep gurgling tones he spake—
"Read with care! scan well its meaning!
well you tremble!—know your fate!"

Then the slouchy, sneaking monster, slunk
away with dingy lamp—
While in horror terror bound me—as I
watched the monster tramp;

Heard the fiend—grim,—hated monster,
howling like some beast of prey—
O, his howl out-roared the tempest! quaked
the mountain!—fierce—I say.—

* * *

Then the storm threw off its madness!
Morning came! The lark I heard!
Naught then seen of note or monster—fled
they from the morn and bird:—
How I hate that dream—that nightmare!
Hate the vision that it brought!
Oft I feel in storm and darkness all the
terror that it wrought!

LIFE.

Oh! great—little word, with a content
divine,
Why wait ye yet longer, thyself to define?
The secret thy heart holds, still running
with time,
We pray thee surrender that secret
sublime.

Since time was, ye've kept it—why longer
withhold
Its meaning, its purpose, yet only half told?
'Tis time to end conflict—thy secret unfold,
We long for its meaning, with a longing
that's bold.

We look down the ages, our sight meets
but strife.
Lo! now there is combat, the battle is rife!
No sign in the heavens—tho radiant with
light.
Life still is a riddle—or short is our sight.

Then why yet delay while we grope and
we pray—
For a light that should turn life's gloom
into day—
We beg in our flight to the region of light—
For a sign that shall give us thy secret—
aright.

Half-hearted we pray, and half-hearted we
sing,
Doubt clangs on the ear while cathedral
bells ring.

Today we are right,—and tomorrow we're
wrong—
Our creeds ever changing with prayer and
with song.

We point to the Cross—as the "Light of
the World."
Then march our battalions with banners
unfurled,
To ravish and plunder—our greed to
appease.
Then praise we the Father—our conscience
to ease.

Ah! something is wrong with the prayer
and the song,
Else why are things mixed so—the right
with the wrong,
Perhaps we might say, right and wrong is
the way,
Ordained thus it seems—since both here
hold sway.

VERMONT.

A song to thee—my native State,
Thy shepherd hills, thy mountains great,
Thy rivers, glens, and silver lakes,
Where Freedom's voice the Eagle wakes.

God's works I've seen across the sea,
Free Switzerland! Fair Italy!
Where Nature oft held captive me,
But naught inspired my soul like thee.

Proud State! thy star in the field of blue,
We hail and admire, so constant and true;
Thy sons are heroes, well known to fame,
The pride of his country—brave Dewey—
we name.

Yet more of glory, fond State, is thy share,
Thy daughters excel! How lovely! How
fair!
With voices as sweet as their virtues are
rare,
They life give and zest to the Green
Mountain air.

WAITING.

Waiting,—still waiting,—
How many that wait,
Hoping, and longing,
As never too late;
Waiting and hoping and longing to be
Something—from doubting and care to be
free!

Waiting, and looking
To see the sun set;
Shadows are lengthening,
Why comes he not yet?
Thus thinks the maiden, and softly the sigh
Serves as an echo responsive to—"Why?"

Waiting and trusting
His plans may mature;
Lavish of labor
Success to ensure;
Thus waits the youth, as he looks with delight
On the picture bright in the distant light.

Waiting and sighing
O'er life's bitter cup;
Hope, almost dying
While drinking it up.
Deeming the pleasures of earth but a dream
The weary are anxious to end the scene.

Waiting and anxious
From earth to be free,
Leaving to others
Life's mutable sea,
Vainly regretting the joys that are fled,
And longing for rest—with the quiet dead.

Many, thus waiting,
Restlessly waiting
For Death's slow approach,
Life almost hating,
As, weeping for those who have gone before,
They wait to pass to the opposite shore.—

We too are waiting—
Waiting for what?
Sunshine and shadow
Shall both be our lot.
So let us, enjoying the sunshine, wait
For shadows that never can come too late.

PAT AND I.

Then we loved each other much,
Pat and I;
When we worked upon the farm,
Pat and I.
Then we loved the hoe and rake,
And the ax that drove the stake,
Loved our mother's pie and cake,
Pat and I.

Then we loved our sister Kate,
Pat and I;
Loved the Christ that in her spake,
Pat and I.
Oh! the songs she used to sing
Made the air about us ring,
To our eyes the tears did bring,
Pat and I.

Then we heard our father's voice,
Pat and I;
And obeyed it out of choice,
Pat and I.
We were true and we were strong,
Sought to keep away from wrong,
And our honest lives prolong,
Pat and I.

But there came a time to us,
Pat and I;
When we thought the hoe a curse,
Pat and I.
For we'd heard or read in books,
That it didn't become our looks,
To work in fields and dig in brooks,
Pat and I.

So we left our mother dear,
Pat and I;
Left her sobbing, all in tears,
Pat and I,

Sent our hoe to Edwin Markham,
Took a train for City Sharkum,
Bound to live by craft or starvum,
Pat and I.

Now we live in Joliet,
Pat and I;
Long's the time before us yet,
Pat and I.
Mother's dead, and sister's dying,
Father's all the time a-crying,
And we both are always sighing,
Pat and I.

Oh! we would our lives renew,
Pat and I;
Better ways we would pursue,
Pat and I,
We would live as mother taught us,
Spurn the evil that here brought us,
Love the hoe, and Christ who sought us,
Pat and I.

THE "HEAVENLY MAID."

How strange is thy mission, thy dual life here,
With a song at the cradle and one at the bier,
With a song for vile Bacchus as he reels at the feast,
And one for the saint, as he prays with the priest!

We find thee disporting with evil and good!
How strange!—"Heavenly Maid"—How misunderstood!
The tyrant, brute-hearted, finds joy in the lyre!
Lo! Nero he fiddles while Rome is on fire!

Thy strains on the air the fierce battle urge!
Then mingle thy notes with the sobs of the dirge;
The battle now over, thy notes did inspire—
The orphan now hears thy sweet voice in the choir.

Pray tell us, Sweet Maid, from thy home in the sky—
What place have brute Nero and Bacchus on high?
Do their voices there blend with the harp and the lyre?
Or have they no place in the Angelic Choir?

PLAY SAINT, OR SINNER.

Make no choice—play saint or sinner,
Either part is best if winner;
Blush no shame!—Time doth attest
That saints and sinners both are blest.

Right or wrong—care not—if winner,
He who fails is counted sinner;
Never mind the course you take,
Run,—run wild!—but reach the stake!

If the while some dare you censure—
For your heartless, vile adventure,
Run undaunted,—praise awaits you—
Wealth and fashion will embrace you.

Lo! you'll share the pomp and splendor,
That both saints and sinners render,
Fawning at your feet and grinning,
Fair ones will false praise be spinning.

Be ye great!—yes,—be a hero!
Such an one as he was,—Nero!
But so sure as God's Eternal,
Ye shall dance with the Infernal!

ONLY A TRAMP.

"Only a tramp," so they say, "nothing more,"
Lying there dead where the surf beats the shore,
There where the horned owl was seen in the tree,
There where stern solitude looks on the sea.

There where the brown bluffs their solemn forms rear,
There where all night, where all day is so drear,
There where the soul shrinks away as in fear,
There, lies an unknown,—to somebody dear,

Only a tramp, who was once but a babe,
Sinless and thoughtless as wind, storm or wave,
Petted and played with, and coaxed on to creep,
Bathed, kissed and fondled, and oft lulled to sleep.

Only a tramp—young the face—most a man,
Stained are his cheeks, where sad tears burning ran;
Brow of much beauty, the features well planned,
What may his name be,—the dead on the sand?

Where now the father—sister—or brother?
Has he a weeping, heart-broken mother?
Fled he from crime as from hound flies the deer?
Whence came he? Who is he? Why fell the tear?

Silence! no answer comes out of the sea,
Naught brings for answer the wind from
the lea;
Myst'ry now holds and denies to set free
The life and the tear that ran out by the
sea.

We, too, are tramps; vain is he who claims
more,
Tramping, sin-scarred, to Eternity's shore;
There where life's myst'ry and tramp we
shall see,
The life and the tear that ran out by the
sea.

WHERE THE RIVER RAN LOW.

Only a word—where the river ran low,
Slowly away to the meadows below,
But the word remained, and the speaker, too,
As the stars looked on from their sea of blue.

Only a touch, on a hand that hung limp,
While light zephyrs played with golden locks crimp,
But that touch, so manly, so pure, so true,
Tinged lip and cheek—to my soul it flew.

Only a kiss—but I hasten to tell
The holy thrill of that bliss-bound spell,
How a bosom did fall, and rise, and swell
With joy and love that doth yet there dwell.

Only a promise, made there in the dell,
Where but two hearts beat as the dewdrops fell.
Still, the word, touch, and kiss, and the promise, too,
Are fixed in my heart; as stars in the blue.

SUPPOSE.

Suppose thou wert a bee, and I were some
sweet flower;
That on my blushing petals thou hadst
lingered many an hour,
A-nestling, dreaming, sipping sweets—in
paradise—my bower,
All hidden from the rude without, thy
senses in my power;
That then some other bee or bees should
seek those sweets to share.
And I should flirt and mix with them, a-
buzzing in the air,
Inviting them more free to be, on finding
thee elsewhere,
Lest thou might see, and seeing feel, thy
flower false, not fair—
Wouldst thou still sweet my honey find?
Sweeter than any flower?
Or wouldst thou sicken in thy cell, thinking
my honey sour?

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CHRISTMAS TIDE.

Fill the goblet full of pleasure!
Let each heart quaff its' full measure!
Christ was born for prince and peasant;
Swell the waves of joy incessant!

List!—the bells from steeples ringing!
Little children carols singing,
Of that star the East adorning;
On that glorious birthday morning!

Strike the harp and sound the cymbal!
Wake the viol and the timbrel!
Laugh—be merry—banish sorrow—
Lightly think thou on the morrow.

Hark! the music—dance ye after!
Glide ye on in mirth and laughter!
Whirl in grace and pretty costume!
Sparkling eyes and cheeks in full bloom!

Ho! for lap robes, sleigh bells, prancers!
Dash away like brave young lancers!
Speed the moonlit snow-cloud way!
On! proud coursers, dark and bay!

Now to feasting—not to folly,
Under boughs of fir and holly,
Lo! the boards so bounteous laden,
Gifts for parents, brother, maiden.

Christmas joys of all the brightest,
Hearts at Christmas tide the lightest,
Praise to thee—Almighty Giver,
For the birth of Christ forever.

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